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Third report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 2169 (2014)

I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 6 of its resolution 2169 (2014), the Security Council requested that I report every three months on progress made towards fulfilling the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). The present report covers key developments related to Iraq, and provides an update on the activities of the United Nations in Iraq since the issuance of my second report, dated 2 February 2015 (S/2015/82).

II. Summary of key political developments pertaining to Iraq

A. Internal developments

2. During the reporting period, the Government of Iraq continued to demonstrate its commitment to the promotion of national reconciliation, including by consolidating national support for the Iraqi security forces, the Peshmerga, the popular mobilization forces and allied tribal and volunteer fighters in their struggle against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Political and religious leaders also led efforts to delegitimize the extremist ideology of ISIL by advocating religious tolerance and non-violence. The Government continued to implement key tenets of its ministerial programme and the national political agreement, including through the approval by the Council of Ministers of constitutionally-mandated legislative and public sector reforms.

3. Regional and international partners maintained their support for the Government of Iraq in its fight against ISIL, which, along with associated armed groups, remained in control of large swathes of territory in the west and north of the country, where they have continued to inflict civilian casualties, cause massive displacement and perpetrate systematic human rights violations that may amount to war crimes and/or crimes against humanity.

B. Political situation

4. During the reporting period, the political leadership in Iraq reached out to the Iraqi public to consolidate national support for the military campaign against ISIL.

On 2 March, Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, the Commander-in-Chief of the Iraqi armed forces, announced to the Council of Representatives the launch of wide-scale military operations in the governorates of Anbar and Salah al-Din. While continuing to deploy the popular mobilization forces, the Prime Minister also held several meetings to mobilize Sunni tribal support in the ISIL-held governorates, including visiting the Sunni tribal leaders from the Dulaim and al-Jaghifa tribes. In one notable visit to Ramadi on 8 April, he visited Iraqi army units and volunteers fighting ISIL alongside the Iraqi security forces. In an effort to coordinate and control all forces mobilized against ISIL, on 7 April the Council of Ministers adopted a resolution requiring all ministries and State institutions to treat the Popular Mobilization Commission as a formal institution linked to the Prime Minister and the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. The resolution granted the Commission the command, control and regulatory authority over the popular mobilization forces.

5. Political leaders also stepped up efforts to counter the extremist ideology of ISIL. On 1 February, the Chairman of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, Ammar al-Hakim, hosted a conference to promote dialogue among religions and sects, which was attended by President Fuad Masum, Prime Minister al-Abadi, Speaker Salim al-Jabouri and Deputy Prime Minister Saleh al-Mutlaq, among others. All leaders, without exception, expressed the need for a legislative reform package to prevent extremist ideology from penetrating Iraq's social fabric, as well as the critical role of religious authorities in countering the extremist ideology advanced by ISIL.

6. During the reporting period, the Government took steps to advance the legislative reform package identified in the national political agreement. The legislative framework to establish a national guard, which would institutionalize the status of volunteer fighters and promote sectarian balance in Iraq's security forces, was approved by the Council of Ministers on 3 February, and a first reading of the bill was conducted by the Council of Representatives on 2 March. The Council of Ministers also approved the revised Justice and Accountability and Banning of the Baath Party Act, which has yet to be tabled in the Council of Representatives. On 2 March, Prime Minister al-Abadi announced to the Council of Representatives that a draft general amnesty law was also under consideration by the Supreme Judicial Council.

7. The Government of Iraq continued to take measures to expedite legal processes and strengthen the rule of law. The Iraqi judiciary took steps to advance Prime Minister al-Abadi's executive order of 1 December 2014 to accelerate the release of detainees. The federal Judicial Authority announced that new procedures had been adopted to speed up the investigation of detainees charged with terrorism offences, and subsequently the Authority announced that 3,902 detainees who had been held on terrorism-related charges had been released. On 25 February, the Chief Justice, Midhat al-Mahmoud, instructed the Prosecutor General and the courts to expedite the cases of 140 female detainees throughout Iraq, including 43 who are facing terrorism charges. In addition, in March, the federal Judicial Authority circulated several directives and instructions recommending that courts of first instance across the country release accused persons on bail, especially female detainees.

8. At the same time, the legislature took steps to strengthen transparency and accountability in governance through the enactment of key legislation and prompt

inquiries into reported violations of human rights. On 16 April, the Council of Representatives commenced a second reading of the constitutionally-mandated draft of the federal Supreme Court law aimed at strengthening the independence of the supreme administrative organ of the Iraqi judiciary. On 10 March, the legislature also conducted the second reading of the amended draft of the federal Civil Service Council law that regulates recruitment and selection in the public service. This is an important step towards reforming the public sector and combating administrative corruption — key tenets in the national political agreement. On 14 April, the Council of Representatives postponed, for a second time, the first reading of the Political Parties law to enable governorate-level consultations to take place. The legal framework of the Political Parties law will provide greater transparency in the work of political parties. The Parliamentary Defence and Security Committee also tabled its report into the alleged massacre at Camp Speicher on 12 June 2014, which included findings and recommendations, including that the military officers who had fled their posts during the massacre be brought to justice.

9. The Council of Ministers also approved constitutionally-mandated legislation to advance decentralization and public sector reform. On 10 March, the Council of Ministers approved the draft General Authority for the Regions law to establish a constitutionally-mandated independent commission (article 105) with oversight functions to guarantee the rights and fair participation of regions, as well as governorates not organized in a region, in federal decision-making. The enactment of the law is another commitment stipulated in the national political agreement to promote decentralization and ensure the balanced representation of all components of Iraqi society in the public service.

10. Reports of sectarian attacks perpetrated by militia groups operating outside State control continued to challenge Government efforts to bring all armed formations under its effective control in order to further national reconciliation and strengthen the rule of law. The assassination of Sheikh Qassim Swaidan al-Janabi, his son Mohammed al-Janabi and several bodyguards on 13 February triggered significant unrest. During the session of the Council of Representatives held on 14 February, Speaker al-Jabouri condemned the crimes, as did Prime Minister al-Abadi, who indicated in his statement that he made no distinction between crimes perpetrated by terrorists and those perpetrated by militias.

11. On 14 February, the Sunni-led Iraqi Forces Coalition and secular Wataniya Alliance suspended their participation in legislative sessions in protest, demanding that an investigation be conducted, that the perpetrators be held to account and that measures be imposed to limit the bearing of weapons to State institutions. On 2 March, the two political blocs resumed their participation after having received assurances from Prime Minister al-Abadi that the Government remained committed to protecting Iraqis from sectarian violence, dismantling armed groups and preventing the carrying of weapons outside State control.

12. On 13 and 20 February, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani issued fatwas calling on members of the security forces, including the popular mobilization force, to refrain from retaliatory acts of violence against civilians.

13. In another effort to gradually restore normality for residents of the capital, Prime Minister al-Abadi issued an order lifting the curfew restricting movement in the Kathhimiya, Adhamiya, Mansour, Karrada and al-Sedea areas of Baghdad,

transferring responsibility for security from the Iraqi army to the federal police. The order took effect on 7 February.

14. The Government of Iraq took measures to lay the groundwork for the stabilization and reconstruction of areas liberated from ISIL. On 17 February, the Council of Ministers approved the disbursement of funds to owners of property affected by terrorist and military operations and authorized the Chair of the reconstruction fund to oversee its implementation. On 11 March, Prime Minister al-Abadi instructed the Salah al-Din military command to make all efforts to ensure that normality returns to liberated areas under its jurisdiction, in coordination with relevant ministries. Prime Minister al-Abadi also instructed the Ministry of the Environment to clear liberated areas from mines and remnants of other explosive devices.

15. Further enhancement of relations between Baghdad and Erbil took place during the reporting period. On 15 February, the Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government, Nechirvan Barzani, met Prime Minister al-Abadi in Baghdad to discuss obstacles to the implementation of the 2 December agreement on energy exports and revenue-sharing, including technical issues related to oil exports, as well as budgetary allocations to the Kurdistan Regional Government. On 6 April, Prime Minister al-Abadi met with Kurdistan Regional President Masoud Barzani in Erbil to discuss Baghdad-Erbil relations, humanitarian issues and the military campaign against ISIL. Following the meeting Prime Minister al-Abadi declared that an important stage had been reached in the federal Government's relationship with the Kurdistan Regional Government.

16. On 26 February the federal Government released $208 million to the Kurdistan Regional Government for the payment of public salaries for January, which was followed by a further funds transfer of $408 million on 20 March for the payment of public salaries for February. On 2 April, the Ministry of Finance announced that a third payment of $450 million to the Kurdistan Regional Government would take place.

17. Baghdad and Erbil also continued to strengthen joint security cooperation. On 8 March, a tripartite meeting was held in Baghdad between military officials from the Kurdistan Regional Government and the Iraqi security forces, as well as representatives of the United States of America. They mainly discussed the coordination between Erbil and Baghdad in the fight against ISIL, as well as Peshmerga support in future operations to liberate Mosul and Hawija. During the Prime Minister's visit to Erbil on 6 April, an agreement was reached with President Barzani to form a joint operations centre for the liberation of Mosul.

C. Security

18. The security situation in Iraq remained volatile throughout the reporting period. Conflict and armed violence was largely concentrated in areas under ISIL control in Anbar, Ninewa and Salah al-Din governorates. Iraq's armed forces, aided by Popular Mobilization Forces and allied tribal and volunteer fighters made progress against ISIL in Salah al-Din and southern Kirkuk, suffering many casualties. Meanwhile, areas recaptured in Diyala Governorate remained under Government control.

19. During the reporting period, the international coalition continued to support the Government's military campaign against ISIL. Coalition airstrikes targeted a number of ISIL positions, including those around Mosul and the surrounding districts, Mount Sinjar, south of Kirkuk, around the Baiji oil refinery and throughout Anbar governorate. On 1 March, from the front lines in Samarra, Prime Minister al-Abadi ordered the Iraqi security forces, aided by popular mobilization forces and local tribal fighters, to retake the city of Tikrit and to liberate Salah al-Din governorate from ISIL. On 25 March, in response to a direct request for assistance from Prime Minister al-Abadi, the international coalition joined these efforts by commencing air strikes against ISIL positions in Tikrit.

20. On 30 March, pro-Government forces liberated eastern Tikrit, after which, on 9 April, the rest of the city was freed from ISIL control. ISIL continued, however, to maintain control over supply routes from areas of Salah al-Din to Mosul and others under its control in northern Iraq. In early February, Iraqi security forces launched ground operations in Baiji to expel ISIL elements from the area. Although the Iraqi security forces control access to the town of Baiji and the refinery, ISIL continues, at the present time, to maintain a presence outside these immediate areas. In early February, armed clashes between pro-Government forces and ISIL in the vicinity of Samarra resulted in heavy casualties on both sides.

21. In Ninewa, Peshmerga forces, supported by popular mobilization forces and international coalition air assets, has maintained pressure on ISIL positions in Sinjar and across the north-west area of the governorate, while ISIL has carried out direct attacks on Peshmerga positions and checkpoints. Control over the city of Sinjar city continues to be contested, with regular clashes and airstrikes taking place. On 11 February, ISIL carried out a suicide car bomb attack against Peshmerga security forces in Sinjar and also conducted several attacks along the Kurdish defensive line between Sinjar and Makhmour. The Peshmerga has repelled these attacks and has prevented further territorial gains by ISIL in these areas.

22. The Peshmerga made steady gains against ISIL in Kirkuk governorate, specifically in the west and south of Kirkuk city. On 8 March, the Peshmerga commenced a major military operation to retake areas under ISIL control, including the Hawija district in southern Kirkuk. By 10 March, the Peshmerga had liberated a vast area that had been captured by ISIL on 30 January. These areas included villages in southern Kirkuk, the Khabaza oilfield and strategic road junctions, including between Baghdad and Mosul. The Peshmerga also pushed the militants further away from the city of Kirkuk and its adjoining oilfields.

23. In Anbar governorate the security situation was highly fluid. In early February, ISIL carried out a series of attacks, including in Ramadi, Hit, al-Baghdadi and Haditha, while heavy clashes were also reported in Rawa and Al Qa'im. On 12 February, ISIL briefly took control of the city of al-Baghdadi and surrounding villages, as well as a strategic road linking al-Baghdadi to the largest Iraqi security forces base in the governorate, Ain al-Assad airbase. In early March, Iraqi security forces and local tribal fighters, aided by international coalition airstrikes, regained control of al-Baghdadi and the road leading to Ain al-Assad base. On 14 April, ISIL launched further attacks in the Ramadi area and encircled the city centre by taking control of al-Boghanim, al-Bosoda, al-Bomahal, al-Bokhalifa and part of the al-Sofia area. On 15 April, the Saraya al-Salam force arrived at the al-Habbaniyah military base east of Ramadi to bolster Iraqi army forces. ISIL made further

advances into the Ramadi city centre on 17 April, leaving only the Iraqi Army's 8th brigade headquarters and Government offices under State control. Haditha and areas in the south of Karma remained under Government control, while the majority of areas in the governorate remained either contested, under siege or in the control of ISIL.

24. During the reporting period, Baghdad continued to be subjected to acts of terrorism, including targeted killings and kidnappings, sectarian violence and the use of small arms fire against civilians; unidentified bodies with gunshot wounds were a common sight in Baghdad. The deadliest attack occurred in Kadhimiyah, on 9 February, when a suicide bomber carried out an attack on a restaurant, killing 21 and wounding 49. On 17 April, a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device was detonated in the Ainkawa district of Erbil, killing three people and wounding 14. ISIL claimed responsibility for the attack.

D. Regional and international developments

25. During the reporting period, the Government of Iraq continued to strengthen its cooperation with neighbouring countries and the wider international community. High-level delegations paid visits to the Islamic Republic of Iran, Qatar, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates as part of wider efforts to strengthen ties with neighbouring countries and promote regional security cooperation.

26. On 11 February, President Fuad Masum headed a high-level visit to Doha, where he met with the Emir of Qatar, Tamim bin Hammad al Thani, and the Prime Minister, Sheikh Abdallah bin Nasser al Thani. During the visit, they reached an agreement to re-establish Qatar's diplomatic presence in Baghdad and to create a joint Iraq-Qatar security committee. On 21 April, President Masum visited Ankara as part of an official visit to build bilateral relations between Iraq and Turkey. On 17 February, the Vice-President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Eshaq Jahangiri, and Prime Minister al-Abadi agreed on the need to strengthen their bilateral and regional ties. This was followed by a meeting on 25 February between Prime Minister al-Abadi and the Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mohammed Javad Zarif, during which they discussed the need for joint cooperation to counter the ISIL threat and achieve security and stability in the region. On 23 March, the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Hassan Rouhani, expressed his country's ongoing commitment to stand by Iraq in the war against ISIL and confirmed its commitment to enhancing bilateral relations. On 20 April, the Speaker of the Council of Representatives, Salim al-Jubouri, Vice-President Osama al-Nujaifi and Deputy Prime Minister Saleh al-Mutlaq met with King Abdullah II in Amman.

27. On 15 April, Prime Minister al-Abadi undertook a three-day visit to Washington, D.C., where he met with President Barak Obama and other senior Government officials, including leaders of the Congress and Senate, as well as the heads of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, to mobilize support for Iraq.

28. On 16 March, Kuwait opened a consulate in Basra as another step towards strengthening ties between the two States. The Government of Iraq also held high-level meetings with representatives of the Governments of Jordan and Turkey to discuss the ISIL threat. Both countries, as well as the Islamic Republic of Iran,

pledged assistance to the Iraqi security forces, including, in some cases, explicit pledges of support to the Peshmerga.

29. On 22 March, Prime Minister al-Abadi placed a phone call to King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia to reinforce bilateral relations between the two countries and to discuss cooperation in the fight against ISIL. During the call the King invited Prime Minister al-Abadi to visit Saudi Arabia.

30. The Government of Iraq is also improving its relations with regional organizations. At its ministerial meeting in Riyadh on 12 March, the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (Gulf Cooperation Council) issued a statement reiterating its support for national unity and peace in Iraq, and calling for concerted efforts to preserve the coherence of the country and the unity of its territory. On 29 March, the League of Arab States concluded its summit, during which several leaders praised the work of Prime Minister al-Abadi, called upon Iraqi leaders to unite and called on the international community to assist the Iraqi Government.

31. On 28 February, Turkey supported the rotation of the deployment by the Kurdistan Regional Government of a fourth Peshmerga contingent, consisting of 150 soldiers, to Kobani/Ain al-Arab in the Syrian Arab Republic.

32. The international community continued to provide security and military assistance to the federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government within the framework of the global coalition against ISIL. The Government of Iraq expressed its appreciation for the efforts of the coalition to combat terrorism. In the Kurdistan region of Iraq, military advisers from Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States have been providing support to the Peshmerga. In early February, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom jointly established the Kurdistan Training Coordination Centre in Erbil to coordinate military assistance and training. On 17 March, the Iraqi Council of Ministers reaffirmed Iraq's commitment to its relationship with the global coalition and expressed appreciation for its support in the fight against ISIL. The Council also underscored the importance of full respect for Iraqi sovereignty in all aspects.

III. Update on the activities of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and the United Nations country team

A. Political activities

33. My Special Representative continued to work in close partnership with the Government of Iraq and stakeholders across the political spectrum to facilitate implementation of the national political agreement and to promote political dialogue and national reconciliation.

34. In Basra, on 5 February, in support of national reconciliation and social cohesion efforts, my Special Representative hosted the second in a series of round-table forums with representatives of civil society, community, tribal and religious leaders and scholars to gather local perspectives on approaches to promote social peace, reconciliation and national unity. Key recommendations from the meeting included the need to: address economic and political marginalization, corruption and

sectarianism; disarm militia groups operating outside the state; empower the Iraqi security forces; and strengthen the rule of law.

35. From 2 to 7 February, in both Baghdad and Erbil, my Special Representative and my Deputy Special Representative inaugurated and participated in an Interfaith Harmony Week observance organized by UNAMI in collaboration with civil society groups and religious leaders.

36. UNAMI also continued to engage Iraqi interlocutors on legislative reform. Throughout March, my Deputy Special Representative for Political Affairs held a series of meetings with Vice-President Allawi, Speaker al-Jabouri, First Deputy Speaker Hammoudi and heads of Parliamentary blocs in the Council of Representatives to discuss important legislation. The discussions included the national guard draft law, the draft general amnesty law and the revised Justice and Accountability and Banning of the Baath Party Act.

37. My Special Representative continued to use his good offices to facilitate cooperation between Baghdad and Erbil. On 2 March, he visited Erbil where he met with President Barzani, Kurdistan Regional Parliament Speaker Mohammed Sadiq, the Head of the Independent High Electoral Commission, Sarbast Mustafa, and several other high-level Kurdish officials to discuss outstanding challenges between Baghdad and Erbil.

38. My Special Representative also continued his regional engagement. During the reporting period he travelled to Jordan, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, where he met senior Government officials to seek support for Iraq's national reconciliation efforts and for the fight against ISIL. UNAMI continued its efforts to promote women's rights in Iraq by working towards the implementation of Iraq's national action plan on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), advocating renewed efforts to provide targeted assistance to women and girls affected by violence in conflict, promoting an enhanced role for women in decision-making in the political and social sphere and advising the Ministry on Women's Affairs of the need for reform on a number of laws. On 5 March, my Deputy Special Representative for Development and Humanitarian Affairs joined Prime Minister al-Abadi in a ceremony in Baghdad to commemorate International Women's Day, at which attendees welcomed the appointment of Thikra Alwash as the first female Mayor of Baghdad.

39. On 30 March, I visited Baghdad to underscore the continuing and full support of the United Nations for the advancement of peace, development, humanitarian assistance and human rights in Iraq. I held productive discussions with President Masum, Prime Minister al-Abadi, Foreign Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari, Speaker of the Council of Representatives al-Jabouri and President Barzani of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region. At our meetings we reviewed the progress of ongoing military operations to liberate areas under the control of ISIL, including, most recently, areas around Tikrit. We also discussed the humanitarian and human rights situation in Iraq and Iraq's national reconciliation efforts and other challenges.

B. Electoral assistance

40. Following up on an electoral needs assessment mission in 2012 to determine United Nations support to the Independent High Electoral Commission ahead of the elections in 2013 and 2014, and upon three new requests from the Independent High

Electoral Commission, the Council of Representatives and the Kurdistan Regional Parliament for electoral assistance, a further electoral needs assessment mission was deployed from 15 to 29 March. The team, comprised of representatives from the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), held meetings with representatives of the Independent High Electoral Commission, the Council of Representatives, Government institutions, heads of political blocs, international non-governmental organizations, the diplomatic community, civil society organizations and other interlocutors. The recommendations of the mission will guide the next phase of United Nations electoral activities in Iraq.

41. During the reporting period, the UNAMI Electoral Assistance Office continued its engagement with the Legal Committee of the Council of Representatives with regard to the review of the national electoral framework. UNAMI delivered a presentation to the members of the Legal Committee on seat allocation formulae and provided inputs to discussions on voting rights for the military, special voting and the Political Parties law as well as on parliamentary oversight over electoral processes.

42. UNAMI held regular meetings and consultations with the Board of Commissioners of the Independent High Electoral Commission on ongoing electoral activities and perspectives for future United Nations electoral support. At a meeting held on 24 February between UNAMI, the Chair of the Independent High Electoral Commission and several electoral commissioners, the commissioners noted that United Nations support at the policy-level would be of assistance, and that operational support should focus on information technology, results-management systems, voter registry and media and boundary delimitation. UNAMI also reiterated its concern to the Commission with regard to the continued use of a biometric voter registration system, which relies on contested databases based on outdated food ration cards and special military voting list numbers. Following a subsequent request from the Commission, UNAMI is preparing to engage more intensely in the preparation process of the registration system to ensure its credibility.

43. UNAMI also continued to monitor developments regarding the establishment of the Independent High Electoral Commission of the Kurdistan Region. Its nine-member Board of Commissioners formally assumed its duties on 1 March 2015. The commissioners have indicated to UNAMI and to the electoral needs assessment mission that United Nations electoral support might include policy advice, oversight and operational and coordinative support. The same request was subsequently submitted by the Speaker of the Kurdistan Regional Parliament in a formal request to UNAMI in early February 2015.

C. Human rights developments and activities

44. The protection of civilians from the impact of armed conflict, terrorism and violence, and ensuring their access to safety and humanitarian assistance, remain of critical concern. Since my last report, UNAMI recorded a minimum number of 4,750 civilian casualties (1,465 killed and 3,285 wounded), bringing the total of civilian casualties for 2015 thus far to a minimum of 7,009 (2,255 killed and 4,754 wounded). Since the upsurge in violence at the beginning of June 2014, there has been a minimum of 10,736 civilians killed and 18,565 wounded.

45. UNAMI continued to receive reports of systematic and widespread violations of international law perpetrated by ISIL and associated armed groups. Reports included: attacks directly targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure, executions and other extrajudicial and targeted killings; abductions, rape and other forms of sexual and physical violence perpetrated against women and children; trafficking in persons and sexual slavery; forced recruitment of children; destruction or desecration of places of religious or cultural significance; wanton destruction and looting of property; and denial of fundamental rights and freedoms. Iraq's diverse ethnic and religious communities were gravely affected, particularly Christian, Faili Kurd, Kaka'e, Sabaean, Shabak, Shi'ite and Turkmen communities.

46. Violations of women's rights by ISIL and associated armed groups continue to be of grave concern. Thousands of women and children, particularly from the Yezidi and other minority communities, remain in ISIL captivity. Women who escaped ISIL captivity confirmed in interviews with UNAMI that many of them had been trafficked as slaves and been subjected to sexual and physical violence.

47. ISIL and associated armed groups continue to subject civilians living in areas under their control to grave violations of their basic human rights, including enforcing compliance with its ideology through targeted killings, abductions and sentences handed down by "Shari'a courts". ISIL itself has published videos depicting people being subjected to a range of abhorrent punishments, including stoning, being pushed-off buildings, decapitation and crucifixion. The mass graves found in Zumar in February, containing the remains of 60 persons, mostly of the Yezidi community, is just one such example. Some of the bodies had been shackled and blindfolded at the time they were killed.

48. Throughout the reporting period, ISIL and associated armed groups also continued to target persons and groups suspected of being allied with the Government of Iraq or opposed to their ideology, in particular members of the Iraqi security forces and police. Examples include the abduction of 26 Sunni tribal leaders in Mosul and 59 other members of the Sunni community from al-Alam subdistrict in Salah al-Din on the basis that they opposed ISIL. On 14 February, ISIL published a video depicting captured Peshmerga and Iraqi police locked up in cages. They were wearing orange jumpsuits, and some were being paraded through the streets of Hawija. The fate of the men remains unknown.

49. Respect for freedom of expression remains of concern in Iraq, as journalists and media professionals continue to be subjected to threats, intimidation and more serous violence in carrying out their work. UNAMI received reports that ISIL continued to target journalists, executing one on 4 March. On 9 April an international journalist working for Reuters was forced to leave Iraq after he was subjected to a campaign involving death threats on the media after he filed reports of violations allegedly carried out by armed militia during the campaign to liberate Tikrit from ISIL.

50. During the reporting period, ISIL continued to destroy sites of religious and cultural significance, causing immeasurable damage to Iraq's historical and cultural legacy. On 26 February, ISIL posted a video online featuring its destruction of artefacts in Mosul's archaeological museum, of statues located at Nineveh's ancient museum and of statues located at Nineveh's ancient Nergal Gate site. These destructive acts were followed by ISIL attacks on the Nimrud and Hatra archaeological sites. ISIL also desecrated and destroyed other religious and historic

sites of significance in Mosul, including the thousand-year old mosque of Imam Muhsin, the ancient al-Khidr Sunni mosque, the Sheikh Mahmoud Sunni shrine and Christian religious places. On 22 March, the destruction of an ancient minaret, which is of great significance to the Yezidi community in Sinjar, was reported. Between 21 and 22 February, ISIL burnt thousands of historical books and manuscripts looted from bookshops and the Mosul public library, which it later demolished.

51. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) continued its close monitoring of the situation and its advocacy work for heritage protection in Iraq. I myself and UNESCO issued several statements to condemn the destruction of cultural heritage, call for mobilization to stop cultural cleansing and express readiness to assist the Iraqi authorities whenever possible. On 28 March, the Director-General of UNESCO launched the "#unite4heritage" global campaign in Baghdad to build support for the protection of cultural heritage in Iraq.

52. In addition to ISIL violations of human rights, UNAMI continued to receive reports that anti-ISIL armed groups and militias were perpetrating extrajudicial killings of captured ISIL fighters and associated armed groups, abducting civilians, looting and other crimes. Members of the Sunni community were particularly affected. On 21 February, popular mobilization forces beheaded three ISIL members taken captive, tied their bodies to vehicles and dragged them through the streets of Samarra in Salah al-Din.

53. On 28 March, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, delivered a report to the Human Rights Council documenting crimes committed by ISIL and by other armed groups.

54. The ongoing armed conflict and acts of terrorism continued to detrimentally affect children in Iraq. The Task Force on Children and Armed Conflict, co-chaired by UNAMI and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), documented 26 incidents negatively affecting children during the reporting period. Acts of terrorism and armed conflict, particularly crossfiring, indiscriminate shelling and improvised explosive devices, claimed at least 23 child casualties (7 killed and 16 injured), although many cases of child casualties may go unreported. In addition, there was a marked increase in the number of reports received by UNAMI of child recruitment by ISIL in all areas under its control, as well as by pro-Government militias in all conflict-affected areas, including in Baghdad and Basra.

55. On 5 March, the United Nations Gender Task Force, led by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), launched its "Lets Save Our Women and Girls" campaign. The project, which was established in collaboration with the State Ministry for Women Affairs and the Kurdistan High Council of Women, marked the celebration of International Women's Day 2015 in Iraq. The campaign calls for action to support internally displaced women and girls, alleviate their suffering and protect their dignity.

56. During the reporting period, UNDP continued to enhance the capacity of national and regional government institutions to ensure their meaningful and effective participation in monitoring the human rights situation in Iraq. A total of 91 commissioners and core staff (62 male and 29 female) received training on the documentation of human rights violations, report writing, strategic planning and investigations.

D. Camp New Iraq and Camp Hurriya

57. UNAMI continues to monitor the human rights and humanitarian situation of the residents of Camp Hurriya and to facilitate solutions to camp management issues between the Government of Iraq and representatives of camp residents.

58. On 11 February, my Deputy Special Representative for Political Affairs and my Special Envoy on the relocation of Camp Hurriya residents, Jane Holl Lute, attended a high-level meeting organized in Geneva by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on the relocation of residents of Camp Hurriya. My Special Envoy and UNHCR continue to work together to seek durable solutions for the residents through consular and humanitarian channels. As of 14 April, 637 persons had been relocated outside Iraq; 30 had left for Albania through an independent channel; 124 had been relocated through consular readmission to nine countries (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom); 450 had been relocated through humanitarian admission to four countries (Albania, Italy, Switzerland and the United States); and 33 had been resettled in five countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom). In addition to these cases, three persons from the temporary transit location had been accepted by two countries and are awaiting departure from Iraq and 1,121 requests remain pending with 18 countries through the humanitarian, relocation and consular streams. Aside from the above successful relocations, 2,475 persons remain in Iraq, of which 2,469 reside in Camp Hurriya and 6 in accommodations in a Baghdad hotel.

E. Humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and development

59. More than five million people are estimated to require humanitarian assistance in Iraq, including 2.6 million internally displaced persons living in 2,900 locations. Nearly half of all displaced are children. Close to 30 per cent of displaced households are in critical situations, housed in abandoned or unfinished buildings, makeshift structures, schools and mosques; only 9 per cent are living in camps. Hundreds of thousands of Iraqi families have opened their homes to the displaced. As the crisis continues into a second year, conditions for these families are rapidly worsening. Food insecurity has doubled during the reporting period, impacting an estimated 4.4 million Iraqis. In the Kurdistan region, the overall poverty rate has doubled. The Syrian refugee population in Iraq has continued to increase, with 150 to 200 persons arriving in Iraq per day. UNHCR reports that 247,861 refugees are currently seeking safety in Iraq, of which 93,000 live within the 10 camps across the Kurdistan Region.

60. Humanitarian access continues to be severely constrained in large parts of Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa and Salah al Din governorates. Millions of Iraqis continue to live in areas under the control of ISIL and other armed groups. Fighting during the reporting period in Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk and Salah al-Din governorates has displaced thousands of new families. In Haditha and Al-Baghdadi, under siege since an ISIL attack in February 2015, tens of thousands of households have been at extreme risk. The United Nations has used innovative solutions to continue its work in hard-to-reach areas. In February, the World Food Programme (WFP) launched a remote monitoring project through telephone surveys. Other agencies have relied on local partners to reach difficult areas and provide life-saving assistance.

61. Under the leadership of my Deputy Special Representative for Development and Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations and its partners have continued to provide life-saving assistance under the declared level 3 emergency, reaching two million internally displaced persons each month. Front-line responses have been expanded and strengthened. UNICEF, WFP and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) have delivered thousands of life-saving kits through the rapid response mechanism, reaching people within 48 hours of their displacement. WFP has provided hundreds of thousands of emergency rations with in the first days of displacement and millions of family rations in the first weeks. UNHCR and IOM have provided tens of thousands of emergency kits to highly vulnerable households, including in areas under siege.

62. Government coordination of the operation has continued. The joint Government-United Nations Coordination and Monitoring Centre, opened in January in Baghdad with the support of UNDP, including United Nations staff, has provided situational reports on the crisis and coordinated first-line responses. The Joint Crisis Centre in Erbil has coordinated interventions in the Kurdistan Region. A comprehensive registration effort by the Government has improved the tracking and identification of displaced households.

63. During the reporting period, major efforts have been made through the cluster system to support the most vulnerable. Under the food security cluster, WFP has provided food assistance to nearly 1.8 million displaced and conflict-affected people across Iraq. WFP food vouchers have benefitted 423,000 people in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, contributing $10 million per month to the local economy. Emergency assistance provided by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has boosted support for crop production and expanded livestock and veterinary services. Hard-hit famers have produced wheat to feed 120,000 people and 2,000 metric tons of animal feed, grown 52,000 metric tons of vegetables and bred 50,000 hens. Under the education cluster, UNICEF and UNESCO have completed prefabricated schools in camps and host communities in Kirkuk, Baghdad, Najaf, Erbil, Dohuk and Basra. UNICEF has rehabilitated 154 schools in Wassit, Anbar, Diyala and Missan governorates, which had previously served as shelters for internally displaced persons, and UNESCO has renovated 16 secondary schools in Dohuk.

64. Under the shelter cluster, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme has provided 60 prefabricated shelter units in Basra and is building an additional 1,700 in Baghdad, Karbala and Dohuk. UNHCR has continued to accommodate tens of thousands of internally displaced persons in eight camps and is constructing three new camps and rehabilitating 650 collective centres and 660 family shelters to help ensure that households at high risk are able to gain access to safe living conditions. The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) has distributed 125,000 solar-powered lighting and mobile telephone charging kits and installed 280 solar streetlights to improve the safety and security of internally displaced persons in 19 camps. With one of the largest humanitarian networks in Iraq, IOM has provided tens of thousands of non-food and shelter kits as well as multi-season tents.

65. Under the health cluster, the World Health Organization (WHO) has procured medicines, supplies and medical devices to support the delivery of health-care services to internally displaced persons. In February, WHO, UNICEF and the Ministry of Health implemented a nationwide polio immunization campaign, and on

27 April Iraq marked its first polio-free year, a milestone for the country and the international community. Over 5.3 million (94%) of 5.6 million targeted children, aged between 9 months to 5 years, were vaccinated against polio, while 3.9 million of 4.1 million children (96%) were vaccinated against measles.

66. In support of the emergency social protection floor, UNOPS continued to administer the "humanitarian relief quick impact grant" programme on behalf of UNHCR, distributing small grants to fund urgent humanitarian assistance efforts across central and southern Iraq. UNICEF disbursed emergency cash assistance to tens of thousands of displaced families in camps and UNHCR distributed cash assistance to vulnerable families which had been internally displaced. The FAO cash-for-work programmes have created temporary jobs for internally displaced persons, enabling them to purchase life-saving necessities.

67. Under the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for All (WASH) cluster, UNICEF and its partners have built sanitation facilities for internally displaced persons in 40 locations and provided water purification materials for 1.2 million people in central and northern Iraq. Under the livelihoods and social cohesion cluster, UNDP has partnered with Iraqi authorities and non-governmental organizations to provide job skills training and cash grants to promote entrepreneurship and job creation for Iraqi displaced persons, Syrian refugees and host communities. In partnership with UNHCR, UNDP has supported the multi-sector needs assessments for refugees with specific resilience indicators and a host community assessment to measure service delivery and the perceptions of host communities about refugees.

68. Since the time of my second report, internally displaced persons have started to return in small numbers to their areas of origin after the withdrawal of armed groups; many of these families have received non-food items from UNHCR. Without exception, all newly liberated areas require significant rehabilitation; many will require the almost total reconstruction of essential public and private infrastructure and basic services.

69. During the reporting period, funding has emerged as one of the major constraints facing the humanitarian operation, notably the extraordinary contribution of $500 million from Saudi Arabia in support of the humanitarian operation that concluded at the end of March. With less than 40 per cent of the humanitarian strategic response plan funded, on 18 February the United Nations in Iraq made a funding appeal for $150 million to support fast-track priorities. Although donors have come forward to cover a significant portion of this appeal, 60 per cent of emergency activities, including health and food security life-saving programmes, are currently at risk of being curtailed or shut down due to lack of funds. My Deputy Special Representative for Development and Humanitarian Affairs is overseeing the elaboration of a new, streamlined and highly prioritized humanitarian response plan, which will be launched in Brussels at the end of May. Major efforts are also under way to secure funding for stabilization and reconstruction in newly liberated areas. Dr. Abdul Basit Turki has been appointed by the office of the Prime Minister as the Chair of the Fund for Areas Affected by Terrorist Operations, with discussions continuing on the status of a funding mechanism to be managed by the United Nations.

F. Security and operational issues

70. The conclusion and entry into force of a status of mission agreement between the United Nations and the Government of Iraq is still pending, and the delay in its finalization is significantly hampering the effectiveness of United Nations operations. The cumbersome entry and exit procedures for United Nations staff affect all personnel, and in particular the normal rotation and deployment of United Nations guard units.

71. Despite the volatile security environment in Iraq, United Nations operations in the country are ongoing. On 31 January, United Nations staff in Kirkuk were temporarily relocated to Erbil following ISIL rocket attacks against the al-Hurriyah airbase, with two rounds of ammunition landing within 100 metres of the United Nations compound in Kirkuk. On 4 February, after a security assessment, relocated United Nations staff returned to Kirkuk. The Baghdad office and the field offices continue to monitor security closely and have taken requisite mitigation measures accordingly.

72. Procurement and logistical operations also continued under challenging conditions. The lengthy procedures required to obtain access authorizations and escorts for staff, including the receipt of equipment and supplies at locations throughout Iraq, have been major constraints to the efficiency of such operations.

73. In Baghdad, the building of three-storey and five-storey accommodation structures meant to house United Nations staff has been delayed due to the ongoing security situation. As an alternative, UNAMI is in the process of building two two-storey buildings and four single-storey buildings. These new buildings, which are estimated to be completed by February 2016, will add 84 units to the existing accommodation in the D-2 compound (formerly housing the United States Agency for International Development). In addition to the new construction, most existing units are being divided to accommodate an additional staff member. New buildings and modified units will bring the total capacity of the D-2 compound to 271 living spaces.

IV. Observations

74. While the security and humanitarian situation in Iraq remains complex, fluid and challenging, Iraqis and their regional and international partners have together made progress in the fight against ISIL in Iraq. The recent liberation of towns in the Salah al-Din governorate and elsewhere are encouraging signs of hope.

75. I am convinced that the Government of Iraq, under the leadership of Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, is committed to the promotion of national reconciliation and adoption of laws that help consolidate national unity at a time of war against ISIL. The United Nations is fully engaged and I reiterate the readiness of the Organization to continue its support for all efforts towards national reconciliation, social cohesion and legislative reform. In this regard, I urge all Iraqi stakeholders to cooperate with each other and with the Government in this endeavour, including on consensus on a number of pending essential laws and in particular on a national guard law.

76. The partnership of the federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government is vital to maintaining national unity at this time of crisis. I welcome the commitment from both Bagdad and Erbil to implement the oil and revenue-sharing agreement of 2 December 2014 and urge further progress in its full implementation. I encourage both sides to seize the momentum and take further steps towards a comprehensive, fair and constitutional solution for all pending issues. I also call upon both sides to enable internally displaced persons to return to their homes. The eventual return to normality in areas liberated from ISIL will, in large part, depend on close coordination and cooperation between the federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government on all related aspects.

77. It is with appreciation that I have followed the Government's success in improving its relations with its neighbours and other countries in the region, notwithstanding their own differences. The challenges that face Iraq and the region are of a vast and unprecedented nature. They require regional cooperation and support, including political, security and financial support. I call on all members of the international community to continue and to increase support to Iraq and to jointly work towards eradication of the challenges that confront it.

78. As a consequence of the continued activities of ISIL in Iraq, one of the largest humanitarian crises in the world continues to unfold before our eyes. I commend the federal Government and Kurdistan Regional Government for their relief efforts as the needs of millions of displaced persons continue to increase. Additional resources are urgently needed to maintain lifesaving interventions for the more than five million Iraqi people. I call on all partners of Iraq to generously support the new Humanitarian Response Plan to help alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people.

79. The Government must do all it can to ensure the safety of civilians in these areas and enable the displaced to return voluntarily to a stable and safe environment where their lives and property are protected by law. Establishing law and order in these areas should include the handover of security to civilian police as soon as practicable and the ensuring to civilians of access to humanitarian assistance.

80. I am appalled by the continuing brutality of ISIL and its total disregard for fundamental human rights. I am also dismayed by the ongoing targeting of minority communities and those who oppose, or are suspected by ISIL of opposing, its ideology. The terrible crimes of ISIL, which include crimes that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, have been documented in the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to the Human Rights Council. I remind all parties of the need for solidarity as we, together, fight extremist violent ideologies in the region. I also remind all parties engaged in the fight against ISIL that any military operations must be conducted with the utmost care in order to avoid civilian casualties and with full respect for fundamental human rights and humanitarian law. I welcome Prime Minister al-Abadi's calls to all pro-Government forces fighting ISIL to ensure the protection of civilians and their property. I expect that crimes will be duly investigated so that their perpetrators can be held accountable and justice established.

81. The United Nations remains committed to supporting the people and Government of Iraq in meeting these enormous challenges and moving the country in a positive direction. Given the complex changes on the ground, I have requested that a United Nations strategic assessment for Iraq be carried out in order to identify how best the United Nations system could extend such assistance in the coming

period. The assessment process is ongoing, and I intend to report on its outcome during my next report on UNAMI to the Security Council.

82. I also thank my former Special Representative, Nickolay Mladenov, who completed his tenure on 22 March, for his outstanding efforts in support of the Government and people of Iraq through promoting agreement among all interlocutors on issues of common interest to Iraqi society. I welcome my new Special Representative, Ján Kubiš, who has assumed his duties in Iraq. Finally, I thank all United Nations staff in Iraq for their unfailing and courageous efforts to support Iraq in the present challenging circumstances.